

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A telephone handset for use in a communications infrastructure, the telephone handset comprising:

an audio input module for receiving audio from a user speaking at an undesired speaking rate;

an audio output module for rendering audio to the user;

an audio loopback path to present audio from the audio input module to the audio output module so as to be heard by the user during a call between the user and another party; and

wherein the audio loopback path presents audio at a loopback rate depending upon a selectable rate variable selected by the other party to impose an altered talking rate on the user speaking at the undesired speaking rate.

2. (previously presented) The telephone handset of claim 1, wherein the audio input module receives speech audio from the user at a given speaking rate and wherein the loopback rate alters the speaking rate of the user in the audio loopback path.

3. (original) The telephone handset of claim 2, wherein the speaking rate in the audio loopback path maintains a pitch of the speech audio received in the audio input module.

4. (original) The telephone handset of claim 3, further comprising:
a user interface for selectively adjusting the selectable rate variable.
5. (original) The telephone handset of claim 3, further comprising:
a receiver for receiving, from a second telephone handset, audio and a rate variable set from a second audio handset.
6. (original) The telephone handset of claim 3, wherein the audio loopback path presents audio at a loopback rate through a SOLA (Synchronized OverLap and Add) function.
7. (original) The telephone handset of claim 3, further comprising:
a memory location to store a rate variable for a given user.
8. (previously presented) The telephone handset of claim 3, wherein the audio output module further comprises a vocoder for detecting a word rate in the audio loopback path using:
an energy decision metric;
a voicing decision metric; or
a tonality measure.
9. (original) The telephone handset of claim 8, further comprising:
a memory location to store a rate variable and the word rate for a given user.

10. (currently amended) A communication system for adjusting audio rate in a handset comprising:

a first handset for use by a first user;

a second handset for use by a second user, wherein audio captured from the first user at the first handset is presented to the second user at the second handset through a communication infrastructure;

wherein the audio captured from the first user at the first handset is also presented to the first user through a loopback path to an earpiece in the first handset during a call between the first handset and the second handset; and

wherein the loopback path includes a loopback rate for speech audio with a selectable rate variable selected by the second user to impose an altered talking rate on the first user when the first user is speaking at an undesired speaking rate.

11. (original) The communication system of claim 10, wherein the first handset includes a user interface for adjusting the selectable rate variable of the first handset.

12. (original) The communication system of claim 11, wherein the first handset includes a memory location for storing the selectable rate variable for association with the second handset.

13. (original) The communication system of claim 10, wherein the second handset includes a memory location for storing the selectable rate variable for association with the first handset.

14. (original) The communication system of claim 10, wherein the second handset includes a user interface for adjusting the selectable rate variable of the first handset.

15. (previously presented) The communication system of claim 10, wherein the first handset includes a vocoder for detecting a word rate detection in the loopback path using:

- an energy decision metric;
- a voicing decision metric; or
- a tonality measure.

16. (original) The communication system of claim 15, wherein the first handset includes a memory location for storing the selectable rate variable and the word rate for association with the second handset.

17. (currently amended) A program storage device tangibly embodying a set of programming instructions for executing on a communication unit for causing the communication unit to perform the steps of:

during a call between a user of the communication unit and another party, capturing speech audio from the user of the communication unit in a loopback path between an audio input module and an audio output module, wherein the loopback path presents speech audio received at the audio input module to the audio output module for the user of the communication unit to hear; and

when the user of the communication unit is speaking at an undesired speaking rate, adjusting the speech audio from the user of the communication unit captured in the loopback path based upon a ~~selectable~~ selectable rate variable selected by the other party to impose an adjusted speaking rate on the user of the communication unit.

18. (previously presented) The program storage device of claim 17, wherein capturing speech audio includes capturing the speech audio at a given speaking rate and wherein adjusting the speech audio captured includes adjusting the speaking rate in the loopback path.

19. (previously presented) The program storage device of claim 17, wherein adjusting the speech audio captured includes maintaining the pitch of the speech audio.

20. (previously presented) The program storage device of claim 17, wherein adjusting the speech audio captured includes receiving from a user interface an adjustment to the selectable rate variable.

21. (previously presented) The program storage device of claim 17, wherein adjusting the speech audio captured includes receiving from a user interface from a second handset adjustment to the selectable rate variable.

22. (previously presented) The program storage device of claim 17, wherein adjusting the speech audio captured includes adjusting the speech rate through a SOLA (Synchronized OverLap and Add) function.